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Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 01472 270718Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 INR-10 L-03 SS-15 SP-02
/049 W
----------048487 270719Z /17
R 270455Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1198
INFO USLO RIYADH

C O N F I D E NT I A L JIDDA 1472

STADIS//

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, US, SA
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 49022

1. SAUDIA PERSONNEL ARE INDEED PSSSIMISTIC ABOUT COMING ROUND OF CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS. THEY ARE ANXIOUS TO PROTECT THEIR GROWING AIRLINE AND CUSHION ITS ENTRY INTO COMPETITIVE NORTH ATLANTIC SERVICE. THEY BELIEVE USG POSITION, IF ACCEPTED, WOULD ALLOW MORE COST COMPETITIVE AND NUMEROUS AMERICAN CARRIERS TO PREEMPT MARKET BEFORE SAUDIS CAN MOUNT SERVICE OF THEIR OWN. THEY DO NOT ACCEPT OUR ARGUMENT THAT U.S. CIVIL AIR POLICY IS IMMUTABLE, POINTING TO US-UK "BERMUDA II" AND INSISTING THAT SUCH AN OLD AND USEFUL FRIEND AS SAUDI ARABIA SHOULD GET AT LEAST EQUAL TREATMENT.

2. AMBASSADOR HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO SAUDIA CHAIRMAN SINDI OR CIVIL AVIATION PRESIDENT MAHDI, AS BOTH ARE OUT OF THE COUNTRY. LOWER LEVEL CONTACTS HAVE SHOWN LITTLE FLEXIBILITY IN DISCUSSING SAG POSITION, AND WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO INDICATE TO THEM ANY POSSIBLE USG FLEXIBILITY. WE ARE UNCLEAR, FOR EXAMPLE, TO WHAT
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DEGREE RIGHTS OF MULTIPLE DESIGNATION AND FREEDOM OF CHOICE ON CAPACITY AND CHARTERS, ONCE ENSHRINED IN BODY OF TREATY COULD, IN PRACTICE, BE CIRCUMSCRIBED BY SIDE LETTERS AND/OR ANNEXES NEGOTIATED AS PART OF PACKAGE. WE BELIEVE THIS WILL BE NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH SAG.

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3. IN SPITE OF PESSIMISTIC OUTLOOK, WE SEE NO REASON TO
DELAY NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE NO SIGNALS FROM SAUDIS THAT
THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM DELAYED, NOR THAT THEY HAVE
LOSTIICTEREST IN BILATERAL. ATMOSPHERE IS AS GOOD NOW -
FOLLOWING U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S APPROVAL OF F-15 SALES FOR
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND AVIATION - AS IT IS LIKELY TO BE
IN FUTURE, AND WE RECOMMEND THAT TEAM COME AS SCHEDULED.

4. WE WILL TRY TO SOUND OUT HIGHER LEVEL SAG FIGURES
PRIOR TO AMBASSADOR'S DEPARTURE IN EARLY MARCH.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 27 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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